

FIVE

LETTERS

CONTAINING

A NEW AND EASY METHOD

OF LEARNING THE

HEBREW LANGUAGE.



L O N D O N :

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ADVERTISEMENT.

I*F this short Scheme of Grammar is approv'd of by the Public, I shall in a second Edition add a short Lexicon of all the Hebrew Words, placed in a very distinct Order, contriv'd to assist the Memory, and contain'd within the Compass of a few Pages : Some Criticisms shall also be inserted in a sixth Letter. This will compleat the Scheme, and make it a perfect Compendium of the whole Hebrew Language. If that is encouraged, I shall proceed to publish a Greek Grammar in the same epistolary Form.*



LETTER I.

S I R,

YOU express a great Desire of learning *Hebrew*, but complain of the Difficulty of reading by the *Points* as almost insuperable, and wish to have the Rudiments of that Language convey'd to you in a more agreeable manner than appears in common Grammars : I cannot conceive a manner more agreeable than the Epistolar. To satisfy your desire therefore, I will communicate to you, an easy and expeditious Method of learning Hebrew without *Points*, in a Series of Letters, each containing a distinct part of Grammar, so short as to divert and amuse rather than tire or perplex you. Five Letters will, I think, compleat the Design, of which this may perhaps prove the most tedious and difficult.

“ The *Points* were not invented till *after* the
“ Roman Captivity, when the Jews, for preserving their Traditions, put them in writing in
“ their Talmud ; and for preserving their Scriptures, agreed upon an Edition and *pointed* it, and
“ counted the Letters of every sort in every Book :
“ And by preserving *only* this Edition, the ancient various Lections, except what can be discovered by means of the LXXII, are lost.”
Sir Isaac Newton.

Maslef asserts, that the *Points* were invented about 900 or 1000 Years after Christ *, by degrees and at *different* Times, by Jews, Enemies to the Christian Religion. The Rabinical Writings, you know, are very trifling, conjectural and absurd; and I see no reason for supposing their grammatical Inventions less whimsical than their other Works, which are generally remote enough from Truth, good Sense and just Critique. You must be sensible, that speaking Hebrew is now of little or no Use: It is not a Language to be talk'd, but understood. If our Ideas are the same, Difference in Pronunciation is of no Consequence. The true, original Manner of reading is irrecoverably lost, and the *Masorites* knew it not; for they differ much from the Interpreters of the Old Testament who liv'd before them; and the more ancient those Interpreters are, the more different is their reading from that of the *Masorites*.

Observe the *Points* given to the Name of *Cyrus*, *כורש* *choreseh*, כ sometimes without *Daghes lene*, ו turn'd into *Cholem* or long (o); under ך *Segol* (e); ש pointed as *seh* instead of (f). It is impossible to add *Points* more remote from or inconsistent with the Word. Is not this a plain proof of the Ignorance of the *Masorites*, and of the modern Invention of *Points*? The Name of *Cyrus* *כורש* *Kúresh* occurs 16 times in the Old Testament, and the *Points* are every where the same, excepting that *Daghes*

* Nulla eorum (punctorum vocalium) mentio apud Origenem, Epiphanium, Hieronymum. Nulla in *Mischnâ* & *Thalmude*: Nulla in antiquis *Medraschim* & aliis mox commemoratis libris. *Thalmude* valde posterioribus, quamvis innumerae & praesentissimae occurrant occasiones de eis differendi. *Maslef*.

Daghes is sometimes found *in medio* 2. * Like Blunders are committed in most proper Names. The *Points* are now universally believ'd a *modern* Invention, and should always be rejected, when a Sense more natural or proper can be had from the *original* Letters. The learned *Buxtorf* wrote strenuously in Defence of the Antiquity of the *Points*, but was confuted by *Lud. Capellus*. See *Mascler's* Grammar. I shall say no more of them; thus much seem'd necessary to excuse my rejecting intirely the *Points*.

Observe, the Hebrew is to be read and wrote from right to left, in the same order with the following Alphabet.

Number 20	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Figure	כ	י	ח	ז	ו	ה	ד	ג	ב	א
Power ch	i	t	h	z	ou	e	d	g	b	a

Numb. 400	300	200	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30
Figure	ק	ש	ר	ק	ש	פ	ע	ד	ל	מ
Power.	th	sh	r	k	tz	ph	aw	f	n	m

Five of these Letters have a different Form, when they happen to be the last Letters of a Word, and are used for different Numbers: They are call'd
Literæ.

* This Argument was communicated by the late most learned Dr. BENTLEY: I have since found it in *Mascler*; who shews the force of it, and fully vindicates it from the Objections of *Guarinus*. p. 283.

900	800	700	600	500
ⲓ	ⲓ	ⲓ	ⲓ	ⲓ
ts	ph	n	m	ch

Literæ finales. These are used only in the *end* of Words, never in the first, or middle Places. Observe that *thousands* are express'd by two Points thus, ⲗ 1000, Ⲙ 2000 &c. The Letters ⲓ and ⲓ are thus distinguish'd, the former is angular, the other round. ⲓ is distinguish'd from ⲓ, the second Stroke of ⲓ not touching the upper line, and ⲓ is distinguish'd from both, by the descending Stroke on the left being curv'd. ⲓ is crooked, ⲓ a streight line. ⲓ is crooked, ⲓ streight. ⲓ is angular, ⲓ round; the descending Stroke of ⲓ is longer than either of these. ⲓ final is angular, ⲓ circular or round, and ⲓ turn'd in at the Top instead of joining. The original Vowels or *Matres lectionis* are ^{on}ⲓ, ⁱⲓ, ^eⲓ, ^aⲓ to which you may add *y* broad (a) or (aw.) In a Syllable where not one of these occurs, supply the defect by pronouncing such Syllable with (e): always pronounce those Syllables as if (e) were written. That you may remember where ⲓ is written, pronounce ⲓ very broad, as in the Word (*these*,) the fictitious (ě) short as in (*then*.) Thus may you read the Hebrew fluently, as soon as you are acquainted with the Letters: But to read with the *Points* requires much Labour and Time to little Purpose.

The Reasons which have determin'd me to use (e) preferable to any other Vowel, are these.

1. That Vowel occurs oftner than any other Letter in most, if not in all Languages: In English, I believe, it bears the Proportion of eight to one.

2. It

2. It seems the most natural Vowel for the purpose; for when two Consonants are join'd together (no Vowel being inserted between them) they are seldom to be pronounc'd without the Vowel (e); which in that case is, I own, very rapid and almost imperceptible.

To facilitate this Method of reading, I will write the first Psalm in English Characters, using the Greek (ε) for the supplemental or fictitious (e.) Wherever (aw) occurs, it is for y.

*Ashri eaisb asher la elk bawtsesh reshawim ou-
biderk bitaim la awmed oubmoussh:b litzim la isheb
chi am bithourish ieoue b:phtzou oubithour:thou iege
ioumem oulile oueie chawtz shithoul awl ph:lgi mim
asher pbriou ithin bawthou ouawleou la iboul ouchel
asher iawshe itzlib la chen ershawim chi am chi-
moutz asher thid:phenou roub awl chen la ikemou
rishawim bimsh:pht oubitaim bawd:th tz:dikim
chi ioudaw ieoue derk tz:dikim ouderk r:shawim
thawbed.*

This method of reading is, I apprehend, easier than that of *Mascler's*: The Moment you are acquainted with the Form of the Letters, you may easily read the Language without *Points*; which is all I propos'd in this my first Letter, from,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

LET

L E T T E R II.

S I R,

YOU are certainly right in this Observation,
 “ That *familiar* Letters strike the Reader
 “ more sensibly, and impress the Contents with grea-
 “ ter Force upon the Mind, than a multitude of dull
 “ Pages in a formal Grammar.” I wish the Ru-
 diments of the *Greek* and *Latin* Tongues were
 deliver’d in the same Method, intermix’d with
 critical and historical Remarks to entertain the
 Reader : This might recommend the Study of those
 useful Languages to Gentlemen who are frighten’d
 at Grammar in its common form.

You have given me real Pleasure in assuring me
 that you find no Difficulty in reading the Hebrew.
 The Defect of *Pauses* to distinguish Periods, of
 which you complain, may easily be remedied by
 using these *Masoretic Points*. This Character ; is a
 full Stop or *Punctum* (.) A *Colon* is wrote under
 Letters thus ׃ (:) A *Semicolon* over Letters ׃ (;)
 The *Comma* is a single Dot after this Manner ׃ (,)
Points of Interrogation and *Admiration* the *Maso-*
rites have omitted, which is one Instance of their
 Negligence. In putting Points or Stops to Periods,
 Sense rather than the Authority of Jewish Rabbis
 should determine you.

Nouns, or the Names of Things, in Hebrew as
 in English, have no Variation of Cases. Nouns of
 the Masculine Gender end either in a *radical* Letter
 or in one of these three ך, ך, ך. Of the feminine Gen-
 der are Nouns ending in ם or ן, and Nouns signi-
 fying things which are by Nature double, as ך *a*
Hand, ך *an Ear*.

The

The feminine is form'd by adding ה at the End of the Masculine : טוב m. *good*. טובה fem. Nouns in י add ת instead of ה, as מצרי m. *an Egyptian*, מצרית f. *an Egyptian Woman*.

The plural Number is form'd by adding ים to the singular of Nouns Masculine, and ות to Nouns feminine ; e. g. טוב m. Sing. טובים m. Plur. ארץ fem. Sing. *the Earth*. ארצות f. plur. In like manner (s) or (n) added to the singular forms the plural of most Nouns in English. *

The Subject of this Letter is so easy, that by *once* reading of it, I am convinc'd you will understand and retain all that is necessary in the Variation of Nouns, and Participles, which, you know, are in all Languages declin'd as Adjectives. The next Letter will not be much more difficult, nor require any great Strength of Memory.

I am S I R,

Yours, &c.

S I R,

* Observe ; The singular Terminations ה and י are often rejected or thrown away in the Plural, as is י sometimes from the last Syllable of the Singular in forming the Plural. Some Fem. Nouns form the Plur. in ים and some Masc. their Plur. in ות. Nouns ending in ת are the same in the Plur. as in the Sing. but some of these admit of י, others of י before ת. From ים the Letter י is sometimes taken away. Observe also that some Masc. after the Chaldee Idiom form the Plur. in ין.

L E T T E R III.

S I R,

YOU desire to know “what I mean by *Radical Letters*, an Expression I have used but “not explain’d in my last Letter.” The *Radix* or *Root*, generally consisting of *three* Letters, is a simple uncompoundd Word, from which *Derivatives* are form’d, and which is varied by *Number*, *Person*, *Tenses* or *Times*, *Affixes* &c. The Letters, *subservient* to, or used in this Variation, are call’d *Servile*, and are these Consonants ת, ש, נ, מ, ל, כ, ב and all the Vowels, *y* only excepted: The rest of the Letters are radical. *

Having explain’d the Nouns to you, I now proceed to Pronouns, which are either distinct and separated from, or connected and join’d with other Words: Pronouns distinct or separate are these;

Plur.	Sing.	Plur.	Sing.
f. אתם m. אתן ye or yours.	f. אתה m. את thou or thine.	אנחנו or נחנו we or ours.	אני or אנכי com.gen. I or mine.
Plur.	Plur.	Sing.	
f. הם m. הן they or their.	f. אתם m. אתן ye or your.	f. הוא m. היא she be.	

The *Affixes* or Pronouns added to and at the End of Words, are these.

Sing.

* Observe; if the *Radix* consisted of two Letters only, all the possible Compositions of them would be too few for a Language; and if the *Radix* consisted of more than three Letters, the possible Variations of them would be greatly more numerous than is necessary.

[11]

Plur.	Sing.	Plur.	Sing.
f. כן m. כם ye or your.	f. י or י or מ. כה or מ. thou or thine.	נ נ or ' com. gen. we me or mine. our.	
Plur.	Sing.		
f. ה or מ. מו or הם or ס they or their.	f. נה or ה m. נו or הו or ו her his.		

Observe; ו or ' are often inserted before the *Affixes*, and ' particularly after most Monosyllables and many Nouns Fem. The Termination ה before the *Affixes* is generally rejected in Nouns Masc. but Feminines often change it into ת. Plurals in ס cast away ס.

Besides these *Affixes* the following Letters are *præfix'd* to Words, ה *this*. ש *which*. ו *and*. ב *in*. כ *near*. ל *to*. מ *from* or *before*.

I am pleas'd to think the Hebrew appears less difficult than you at first imagin'd: I hope you will have resolution enough to proceed, and not be frighten'd at the strange Account you have heard of the *Verbs* in this Language, which are to be the Subject of my next Letter. All the Assistance and Encouragement I can give, you may expect from,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

B 2

LET-

The Letters י, ת, נ, מ, ה, sometimes א, and ו very seldom, are added to Words; they are redundant and have no Signification. The six first are call'd *Heemantic*.

LETTER IV.

S I R,

I Here send you the most compendious Scheme of the Hebrew *Verbs* that, I believe, is possible to be form'd : If from the general Rules set down you will compleatly conjugate a few Verbs in each form, that, I am persuaded, will sufficiently impress the whole upon your Memory.

Hebrew Verbs have three Conjugations ; two Voices, Active and Passive ; two Moods, Imperat. and Infinit. two Participles ; two Tenses, Præterit. and Fut. The Particip. and Præt. are often used for the present Tense : The Infinit. is the same as the Imperat. only the former is indeclinable, but the Imperat. Fut. Præt. Partic. vary according to Number, Person and Gender. The first and most simple Conjugation is call'd *Kal* in the Active, *Niphal* in the Passive.

2. Part.	1 Part.	Imper.	Fut.	Præt.
מִסֹּר	מוֹסֵר	מִסֹּר	יִמְסֹר	מָסַר <i>he doth</i>
<i>delivered.</i>	<i>delivering</i>	<i>do thou</i>	<i>be shall.</i>	<i>or hath delivered'd.</i>

Observe, the Fut. is form'd from the Præt. by inserting ך before the last radical Letter, and Præfixing the Augment. The Imperat. is the same as the Fut. without the Augment. The 1. Partic. is form'd by inserting ך after the first radical.

The Characteristic of the Passive is ך. In this *Form* the Particip. and Præt. are the same ; and the Fut. is the same as in *Kal*, leaving out ך, which is often

often wanting in *Kal* : Whether the Fut. is Active or Passive must be determin'd by the exigency of the Passage where it occurs.

Imper.	Præt.	
המסר	נמסר	is or
<i>bath been deliver'd.</i>		

The second Conjugation is, in the Active Voice, call'd *Hipbil*. This expresses more than the Action, and signifies to *cause to do a thing*. The Characteristic of this Form is ה before the last radical, and ה is præfix'd to the first radic. except in the Fut. and Partic. Observe; the Præt. Imper. and Infin. are the same.

2. Part.	1. Part.	Fut.	Præt.
ממסר	ממסיר	ימסיר	המסיר
<i>causing to be</i>	<i>causing to</i>	<i>shall or will cause</i>	<i>he doth or</i>
<i>bath caused to deliver.</i>			

The Passive to *Hipbil* is call'd *Hophal*. The Characteristic of this Form is ה in the Beginning. Observe; this Form has no Imper. The Infinit. and Fut. the same as in *Niphal*, and 2d Part. the same as in *Hipbil* : The first Part. is the same with the Præt.

Præt.	
המסר	<i>he is or bath caused to be deliver'd.</i>

The last Conjugation is call'd *Hithpael*. It is *reciprocal* like some Verbs in the French Language. The Characteristic of this Form is הת præfix'd before the first radical. It has no second Partic. The Præt. Imp. Infin. are the same.

1. Part.	Fut.	Præt.	
מתמסר	יתמסר	התמסר	<i>he doth or bath de-</i>
<i>delivering himself</i>	<i>liver'd himself.</i>		

Verbs in every Conjugation or Form, Active or Passive, have the *same* Terminations. The Persons of Verbs are taken from the Pronoun Affixes; If

to

to the following Scheme you put the Verb instead of the Dash or Stroke, you will form it in Numb. Perf. &c.

<i>we</i>	<i>ye</i>	<i>they</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>thou</i>	<i>be</i>	
נו —	תם — תן —	ו —	ת' —	ת —	—	mas. Præt.
					ה —	fem. Præt.
— נ	ו — ת נה — ת	ו — ' — נה — ת	— א	— ת — ת	— ' — — ת	masc. Fut. fem. Fut.
	נ — נה —			— ' —		masc. Imp. fem. Imp.

Before I finish this Letter upon Verbs, it will be right to give you some Observations concerning *anomalous* or imperfect Verbs: Such are 1. Those having ' or נ for the first radical. 2. ' or ו in the middle. 3. The second Radic. Letter doubled. 4. Those ending in ה. Verbs having נ for the first Radical, or the second Radical doubled, or one of these Vowels ה, ו, ' , א for a Radic. Letter, often reject them in the Formation. Most anomalous Verbs are conjugated both as regular and irregular. Some of the 3d and 4th Sort repeat the two first Letters, and are then conjugated as regular Verbs. e.g. קלקל and שעשע from קלל *to be light or vile*, and שעה *to behold with pleasure*. Imperfect Verbs of the 2d Sort double the last Radic. in the last Conjugation, *Hitbpael*; except the last Radic. is ה, and then the second Radic. is never rejected. The Characteristic ת in the last Form, *Hitbpael*, is often rejected, and is always placed, not before but, after these Letters ש, ז, ד, ו, but after ו it is chang'd into נ, and after ז into מ.

Now there is nothing more wanting than a Lexicon and a Hebrew Bible: However I shall send you one

one more Letter containing an Analysis of Part of
the first Psalm ; which will compleat the Design of,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

LETTER V.

S I R,

I Must recommend *Arias Montanus* his Bible, *Bythner's Lyra Prophetica*, and *Mascler's Grammar* to you : In the last you will find all the Irregularities and *Minutiae* of Grammar, which it was not possible nor necessary to insert in this short Scheme. The other Books will greatly assist a Beginner in finding the Roots and interpreting an Author. To find the Root you must reject all Affixes, and Letters which the Root has receiv'd in Formation : If three Letters remain, they constitute the Radix ; if less than three, then take ׀ or ׁ in the Beginning, in the Middle put ׀ or ׁ, or in the End double the second Letter or add ך or ם. For a Praxis take the first Verse of the first Psalm.

אשרי Ashri. *Blessings or Blessed*. A noun Plur. having no Sing. הַאִישׁ eish, *the or that Man*, from אִישׁ a Man, with הַ the demonstrative Article præfix'd. אֲשֶׁר asher, *which or who*, the pronoun relative, indeclinable. לֹא la. *not*, an Adverb. הלך elch, *bath walked*, 3d Perf. Sing. Præt. in Kal. בעצת bawtzeth, *in Counsel*, a noun Femin. from עצה, הַ changed into ת, deriv'd from the Verb יעץ *he consulted*. בַּ præfix'd is the Præposition *in*. רשעים rishawim,

ri:shawim, of the wicked, Plur. from רשע *a wicked Man.* ודרך *oub:derk, and in the Way.* ו *and,* ב *in,* affixes, דרך *a Way or Custom.* חטאים *hetaim. of Sinners,* a noun Masc. Plur. from חטא *a Sin, to sin.* עמד *awmed, bath stood* 3 Perf. Masc. Sing. Præt. in Kal. ובמושב *oub:moush:b, and in the seat,* ו *and,* ב *in,* affixes, מושב *a seat,* a noun Masc. Sing. ך is a Heemantic Letter, from the Root ישב *be bath set.* י is changed into ו. לצים *letzim, of the Scorners.* Noun Masc. Plur. from לץ *a derider,* from לוץ *be bath derided.* ישב *ish:b, be bath set.* 3 Perf. Masc. Sing. Præt. in Kal.

In using Lexicons which have Points observe, that the Conjugations *Piel, Pual, Poel,* are the same as *Kal,* differing only in the Points.

With this Letter I have sent you a Scheme of the Hebrew Grammar greatly contracted, in which you may see the whole at one View ; any seeming Obscurities in it will, I hope, easily be remov'd by having recourse to the preceding Letters.

By your Advice I intend to publish this short Scheme ; and if it proves of any considerable Service in promoting the Study of the Sacred Writings, it will be the highest Satisfaction to him, who is,

S I R,

Your most humble Servant.



A HEBREW GRAMMAR.

Hebrew is read from right to left.

In the End of Words these Letters are used

a Vowel, pronounce them with (e.)

Nouns have no variation of Cases. The fem. is form'd by adding ה or ת to the masc. The plur. masc. is form'd by adding ים to the sing. The plur. fem. by adding ות to the sing. fem.

PRONOUNS. אני, אנכי, I. אנחנו, we. אתה m. את f. thou or thine. אתם m. אתן f. ye, your. הוא be. היא she. הם m. הן f. they. Instead of these are often used the following Affixes added to the End of Words. י or נִי, I or mine, נו us, ours. כָּ, כֶּה m. כִּי, כִּי f. thou, thine. כֻּם m. כֵּן f. ye, yours. לוּ, לוֹ bis, him. נָה, הָ ber. מוּ, מוֹ m. הֵן, הֵן f. them, their. These are also præfix'd to Words. בּ in, וּ and, כּ near, לּ to, מּ from, הּ this, שׁ who. The Hee-
 mantic Letters י, ת, נ, מ, א, ה, and ך are sometimes added to Words, but do not alter the Sense.

VERBS have 2 Voices, 2 Moods, 2 Tenses, 2 Particip. and 5 Forms. The 1st Form call'd *Kal* signifies simply to do.

1. Part. Act.		2. Part. Pas.		Fut.		Præter.		Masc.	
Plur.	Sing.	Plur.	Sing.	Plur.	Sing.	Plur.	Sing.	Plur.	Sing.
מוסרים	מוסר	מסורים	מסור m.	ימסור	ימסור	מסרו	מסר ³ per.	מסרו	מסר ³ per.
מוסרת	מוסרה	מסורות	מסורה f.	תמסור	תמסור	מסרת	מסרת ²	מסרת	מסרת ²
				נמסור	נמסור	אמסור	אמסור	אמסור	אמסור
Infinit.		Imper		3 P. f.		2 P. f.		3 P. f.	
מסור & מסר		מסור m. מסורי f.		תמסור f.		תמסור f.		מסרתי ¹	

The Passive to *Kal* is form'd in ך, call'd *Niphal*, and signifies to be done. Præfix ך to the præt. of *Kal*, and it is the præt. of *Niphal*. The future is the same as in *Kal*, leaving out ך before ך.

The 2d Conjugation, call'd *Hipbil*, in the Active is form'd in ' , and signifies to cause to do a thing.

I. Part.				Fut.				Præt.			
Sing.	Plur.	Sing.	Plur.	Sing.	Plur.	Sing.	Plur.	3. p. Sing.	2. p. Sing.	1. p. Sing.	1. p. Plur.
ממסר	ממסיר	ממסיר	ממסיר	ימסיר	ימסירו	המסיר	המסירו	המסיר	המסיר	המסיר	המסירו
ממסרת	ממסרות	ממסרת	ממסרות	תמסיר	תמסירו	תמסיר	תמסירו	תמסיר	תמסיר	תמסיר	תמסירו
ממסר	ממסיר	ממסיר	ממסיר	ימסיר	ימסירו	המסיר	המסירו	המסיר	המסיר	המסיר	המסירו
ממסרת	ממסרות	ממסרת	ממסרות	תמסיר	תמסירו	תמסיר	תמסירו	תמסיר	תמסיר	תמסיר	תמסירו

The Passive call'd *Hopbal* is form'd in ה, and signifies to be caus'd to do a thing. The Præt. is the same as in *Kal*, præfixing ה to it. The Fut. and Infin. are the same as in *Nipbal*. It has no Imperative.

1. Part.	
Plur.	Sing.
המסרים	המסר masc.
המסרות	המסרה fem.

The last Conjug. call'd *Hitkpael* is form'd in **הת**, and signifies to cause himself to do a thing. Præfix. **הת** to the Præt. of *Kal*, and it is the Præt. of *Hitkpael*.

[illegible]

VERBS beginning with ך, or having the 2d Letter of the Root doubled, or having one of these Letters, ך, ה, נ in the Root, often reject them in the Formation. These Irregularities are best learn'd by Practice.

To find the Root, reject the *Heemantic* Letters, Affixes and Letters acquir'd in forming. If less than three remain, add *ʹ*, or *ʹ*, in the Beginning, or *ʹ* or *ʹ* in the middle, or double the 2d Letter, or add *ʹ* or *ʹ* to the End.

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